MARVEL
PG 21

WINICK

CALAFIORE

HOLDREDGE

LEGACY: PART TWO

EXILES™

MAINFRAME

This is the central command center of the Vi-Locks.

And he leads them.

He has led the Vi-Locks almost from the beginning.

It is not his strength that makes him their leader...

...it was his comprehension. It was his unique mutant ability.

He understands technology. He sees it. He feels it. It is music to him. It is his language. It is his life.

There's no need to go after them...

His name is Forge and he rules this realm.

Are you certain?

I will admit that this is a fair amount of conjecture, Banner, but the probability is *deeply* in my favor.

These *fresh wires* that troll along the perimeter of Las Vegas... I *bonded* with their drives...

... and it appears as though they made contact long enough with one of these... *Exiles* during their confrontation that we were able to see their thoughts.

Can you trust the information gathered by these... *things*, Forge? They're so new and loathsome... and not particularly coherent.

It is my belief that these *off-worlders* will not present a problem to our Network.

You're such a *snob*, Banner.

It is of no consequence. They will grow into greater beings like ourselves some day. For *now*, we need only see what they *saw*.

And we will not have to search them out... they will come to *us*...

AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

These are The Avengers. The last hope for humanity.

With the help of the Exiles, they aspire to make one last desperate effort to return their world to some semblance of its former self.

All they have to do is infiltrate Mainframe-- a living mechanized fortress-- and battle an army of soulless super beings--the Vi-Lock Primes-- whose combined power could only be described in Biblical terms.

No problem.

Well... a few problems.

Oh, like e#$% we will.

Take it easy, Morph.

Take it easy! My e#$$%!

Blink, this dude is out of his mind if he thinks we're going along with this &%$#@!

FROG
THE RHINO
THE BLOB
ICEGIRL
HAVOK
POWER FIST
DAREDEVIL
LEECH
EMMA FROST
SPIDER-WOMAN
RACHEL SUMMERS
DR. OCTOPUS
BEAST

I don't mind running headlong into *certain doom*. I often find it *poetic*. I see myself as *quite* the rogue--

--but I don't see the point in blowing our brains out before we even *get* there.

Pym isn't suggesting anything like that... *are* you?

No, Blink. I assure you that it is fairly *low risk*--

--but if we're going to capture Cypher and create a vaccine from his blood, it's absolutely necessary that we get inside *Mainframe*.

The Primes' HQ isn't easily accessed. It's practically a living computer. It's like a body-- any foreign objects will be detected and *expunged*.

You're going to need to get in there without alerting anyone or anything. At least at *first*.

The only way to do that is to get Mainframe to think you're *Vi-Locks*.

Oh, now that he's explained it all in detail, I understand...

It's *totally insane!*

We're all in, Pym. Do what you have to.

So says *you*-- team leader!

Changelings are *immune* to the virus. You'll *never* convert, Morph.

Oh, so you think I only care about *myself?*

Pretty much.

Duly noted. I'm in.

Each of you will have to be *contaminated* with the Warlock virus. Just enough to get past the sensors, but not enough to get *fully* converted.

It'll take about *four days* to complete the process. We'll try our best to make all you *Exiles* comfortable.

Some of the other Avengers will take care of your lodgings. Hank, Otto and myself have a great deal of work to do.

So... *Nocturne*, is it? Your folks are *Nightcrawler* and *Scarlet Witch*, huh?

Well, I must say, they created a truly *beautiful* combination.

You *hitting* on me, big man?

Yes.

Is that a *problem?*

Not that *I* can see...

We actually have *more space* than we know what to *do* with. The set-ups are pretty cozy.

We raided most of the better hotels.

That sounds *great.* We don't always get real beds... *um*, what *do* you prefer being *called? Spider-Woman* or--

No, please--

--my name's *Mary Jane Watson.* But everyone calls me *MJ.*

Far out.

So Rachel, who's the most powerful *psychic* you people have?

Um, well... that would be *me.*

Good. You take after your *mother,* then.

I had this idea when we were trapped on this world dominated by *Skrulls*...

...I want you to try it for me...

LATER...

Wow. They weren't *kidding* about outfitting the living quarters with stuff they've plundered from hotels. They've got DVDs, too.

You want to watch something, Calvin? I've never heard of these, but you know my movie-going experience is slightly limited since we didn't *have* any movie theaters where I'm from.

No. I think I'd rather not.

Okay.

We've got three or four days of downtime. I'm *not* going to put up with you pulling any *more* of this *crap.*

We *are* going to talk about it.

I don't know *what* you mean.

Calvin, *Enough.*

You've been like this for over a *month.*

I've let it go. We've *all* let it go. But that's it. *Talk to me.*

What's *wrong?*

What do you *think* is wrong?

I'm *sick* of this, Clarice.

I want my *life* back. I want to go *home.*

We *all* do.

I *know*... I... I just... I've had to face some very hard facts... some things about myself that... are... *surprising*.

Like what?

Like I'm not as *tough* as the rest of you.

Cal...

No. It's *true*.

I was right to ask you to lead the team because I *wasn't capable*... and this is just-- just an extension of that.

I liked my life. I liked my friends. I liked knowing who the *bad guys* were. Who the *good guys* were.

Despite how bizarre or dangerous it may have become... it was a world I *understood*.

Look at this *disaster* of a planet! Almost everyone I knew back home is *dead* or some @#$%^ up electro-zombie vampire!

How could this happen? *Why* did this happen?

What can I do? *Tell* me, Calvin. How can I help you?

Tolerate me. I'll *always* do my job. I *swear*.

Just be my *friend*, okay?

I *hate* this!

I thought we were *more* than friends?

Yeah...

THREE DAYS LATER...

After several rounds of "infection therapy" as it was coined by Morph...

Alright, gang... this is it. *Mainframe.*

Time to see if Doc Pym's theory passes the test.

Get ready to *teleport.*

" .we sure don t."

How long will t take them to detect it, Beast?

I would say a *minute* is a *conservative* estimate, Mimic.

BEEEP!

This is Beast to home base. Phase one is complete.

Repeat This is Beast We have completed phase one Over

The fools managed to infiltrate Mainframe... but have given themselves away.

Go, Banner Bring everyone

Here they come

That was fast

As part of the plan, Daredevil Let's hope we can survive it.

It was Doctor Pym's plan-- with some strategy help from Blink and Mimic

Long ago, before becoming a scientist and a super hero, Hank Pym was a high school basketball star. He's quite fond of sports analogies.

TAKE 'EM OUT HARD!!!

Team Beta gets a pick.

You will *not* survive this incursion, *human*.

Is that right, Cap? Am I going to be *assimilated?*

They place their bodies between the opponents and their teammates.

Tackling? You big, stupid, stone-butted sissy girl!

I am going to tear you *three* new ones!

Mimic and the rest of **Team Beta** *would take the hit.*

Scorpion, I always hated your lame butt, even back home.

Now you're some cyber-zombie! *Still* not making points!

While the much smaller **Alpha Team**-- *Blink, Nocturne, Spider-Woman and Havok-- would roll straight for the basket*

Isn't the Abominat on a *little* big for just you and me?!

Just shut up and hit him, Frog--

CRACK!

BAAM!

--we're not winning this fight!

You ever wonder why you were never *infected*, Rhino?

WHUMP

...the truth is we never *wanted* you!

SLAM

CRACK!

So rude! *Trash talking* is not what I expected from you cyber robot folks!

That's it, you stinking spider-freak! Use *all* them arms! *C'mon!* Feel like you're making a *real* effort!

I *only* move when I *want* to move. And all I want to do is give you the butt-whupping you deserve!

ELSEWHERE...

This is it. The Tattoo says Cypher's in this *Containment Center.*

uh-huh... now all we have to do is *find* him. That shouldn't be *too* hard.

I don't suppose the Tattoo mentioned which one of these canisters holds *Cypher,* did it?

Only because you're still just *meat!*

Once you are on *our* side-- you will *move*-- you will *bend*-- you will *break!*

No. So we've got some *work* to do. Fan out--

AAUUUUCKK!!

"--we don't have a lot of time."

This is *all wrong.*

Why would they be so d m as to transmit over the air *inside* Mainframe?

No. They *wouldn't be*

What *else* is going on inside my comp ex? *Show me.*

Let me see *every* corner - every *room*... every..

There. I see you. Off-worlder... what *are* you doing?

Time for you to meet the *master* of the house.

This *isn't* Cypher.

How can you be sure? The age looks right.

Because those are *breasts.* And in my experience they usually belong on the *women* folk

Cease this activity at *once* and *face me!*

I will convert you all *painlessly* if you are *truthful* about your intent ons.

Sounds like a *swell* offer, *Forge!* But I think we'll choose to *not* become one of your pathetic drones.

CREEEEE!

You dare to *challenge* me, Havok?!

Who do you think you are striking, meat? Where do you think you are?

In Mainframe, I am *everywhere!* I am one with every *circuit!* I am in touch with every *spark* that flows along every *wire!*

In here, I am *God!*

And there is no *deceiving* God!

Your *mind* will tell me *all* that I desire *knowing,* OFF worlder!

Don't- Stop-- *please!*

You will *join* with me, girl! *Show me!* Why have you *breached* my home? What do you *seek?*

FLEP-FLEP-FLEP-FLEP!

AAAIIIEEE!

A *cure...?*

How *poetic.* To stop the *ocean* that is the *Vi-Locks* you must find the *raindrop* that began it all! You were *very* close...

...I have every belief that you would have succeeded...

...but it will all be for *naught.*

KA-BOOM

I should have eliminated Cypher *years* ago. I suppose it was a last remnant of *human frailty.* Some type of *affection* for the being that gave *birth* to us all.

Evac.

Yes! *Run!*

You are no longer a *threat* to us, off-worlder...

BLEEENK!

"...*none* of you are!

BLINK!

"It will not be long before this *entire planet* is of one mind. Of one race!

BLINK!

"We are the *sovereigns* of this reality!

BLINK!

BLINK!

"And we have just *begun* to evolve!

BLINK!

"Our world is just the *beginning!*"

BLINK!

Whoa! Are we back in Vegas? Did we nab Cypher?

I don't think so, Power Fist.

That was a big leap, Clarice!

Why did you teleport us all in one--

WHUUMP!

CLARICE!

PYM! PYM!

What did they do to her?

Forge infected her!

God Almighty! It *must* have been *Forge!* He's the only Vi-Lock that can cause this much transformation so quickly.

Get her to the *medi-lab!*

Where the *hell* do you think I'm going?! Get moving, man! She's--

Calvin... we're in... *trouble.*

It's *going* to be okay. We're going to get you *transfused* before this spreads.

I swear to God, Clarice-- we're *going* to get you through this.

No... you don't understand... the *Tallus*... it's telling me we *failed.*

We failed... Without Cypher we have only... only *one* alternative...

...we have to *destroy* the Earth.

TO BE CONCLUDED...